

## open wounds don't heal instantly

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by [orphan\\_account](#)

## Summary

After seventeen years, a kidnapping, magical powers, manipulation, and friendship, Prince Tommy is finally home.

What does he do now?

How do you learn to be a part of a family when all you know is how to be alone?

[ this is a sequel to healing (in more ways than one) so if you haven't read it, uhhh you don't have to read it!! you just might be a bit confused!! ]

## Notes

HELLOOOOOOO!!!! IM BACK

sequel time baby

prepare for fun, pain, more fun, more pain, and random misadventures

in the immortal words of my friend pico: its the trauma innit

enjoy!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

## old habits die hard

“I regret ever even suggesting that you two move in.”

Tubbo and Ranboo were in Technoblade’s room, going through his jewelry. Ranboo shrugged.

“A poor decision on your part, really. Even though it was technically Wilbur who asked.” Techno sighed.

“Why are you even doing that? Dad gave you some last week.” The two didn’t even spare him a glance. He huffed.

“At least steal from Wilbur or something! Why me?” Tubbo’s mouth quirked up.

“He needed a good distraction.”

“‘He’?” Techno said, turning around.

Tommy stood in the doorway holding an abundance of enchanted golden apples.

“Uh, hi?”

“Oh, *hell no*.”

Tommy sprinted out of the room, laughing as Techno followed close behind.

He ran into Wilbur’s room, quickly throwing the gapples onto his bed before locking the door.

Wilbur looked up from his guitar.

“What the fuck are you doing?”

“Hiding, obviously.” Tommy said, sitting down on the floor behind Wilbur’s bed. He sighed.

There was a loud knock on his door. Wilbur smiled when he answered.

“Hello, Technoblade. To what do I owe this pleasure?” Techno glared.

“I know he’s in here.”

“I haven’t got a clue who you’re talking about. It’s just me in here.”

A hand grabbed a grapple off the bed, followed by a loud crunch of it being bitten into. Techno raised his eyebrows. Wilbur laughed.

“Oh come on Tech, you really couldn’t share with him?”

“I gave him three earlier.” Techno deadpanned.

“I’m a growing boy or whatever, fuck off!” Tommy yelled from behind the bed. Wilbur grinned.

“You heard the kid, he’s gotta get stronger! How else is he gonna even come close to beating you in a fight otherwise?”

“Oh fuck you bitch, I could totally beat him in a fight any day-” Tommy said, yelping when Techno barged in and quickly grabbing the gapples off of the bed. Reaching towards Tommy, he swiped the one in his hand.

“Hey!” Techno smirked at Tommy’s offended expression, taking a bite of the fruit before tossing it back to the teen. Tommy began grumbling vague insults from his spot on the floor.

“Y’know, Dad would totally get you some if you asked.” Tommy grew quiet. After a moment of silence, he responded.

“No, I’d rather take yours.” He grinned. Techno glared.

“You’re impossible!” He marched out of the room, golden apples in hand. Wilbur sighed and walked over to sit next to Tommy.

“Can I ask you something?”

“Go ahead.”

“Why do you avoid Dad?”

“I don’t *avoid* him, I just don’t see him often.”

“Why not?” Tommy sighed.

“It’s weird, okay? I don’t really know how to act around him. You guys already met me before you knew who I was, and we became friends. But with him... I don’t want him to feel like he has to like me just because I’m his son.” Wilbur had a knowing smile on his face.

“Go talk to him, Tommy. Trust me.”

-----

Living in the kingdom was awesome. When he first arrived and the news spread, there was a huge festival to celebrate that their youngest prince had finally come home.

It was *amazing*.

And living with Tubbo and Ranboo was the best. He loved knowing he had friends anytime he needed them, or they needed him.

As for Techno and Wil, Tommy loved them. They were probably the best brothers Tommy could ever ask for (although he'd never admit it).

All in all, he was comfortable with all of them.

Philza was a different story.

It wasn't that the man was difficult to get along with, on the contrary, he got along with everyone. It was just... strange. Tommy knew how to act around brothers for the most part, making it easy to hang out with the twins. Being with his friends was similar to that.

But Tommy had no experience with dads.

Standing outside of Phil's office, Tommy hesitated.

What was he supposed to say? Should he act more formally since he's the king? Should he apologize for steering clear of the man for the whole week he's been at the palace? Probably.

*Fuck it.* Tommy knocked.

"Come in!"

He opened the door and stepped inside awkwardly. After he shut the door, Phil looked up from whatever he was reading.

"Oh, Tommy!"

"Am I interrupting something? I can come back later, if you're busy-" Tommy said, taking a couple steps back.

"No! I'm basically done, anyway. What did you need?"

Tommy ran his fingers through his hair.

"I, uh, I wanted to say sorry." Phil looked at him, confused.

"For what?"

"For avoiding you. Not that I meant to, or anything! Okay, maybe I did, but not because of you-"

"You don't have to apologize! You're still getting settled in. I'm sorry for making you feel that way. I don't want you to feel like you have to like spending time with me just because I'm your father." *So this is why Wilbur pushed me to talk to him.* Tommy shook his head frantically.

“No, that’s not it! It’s funny actually, I said almost the same thing to Wilbur.” Phil’s eyes softened slightly.

“Oh. Maybe if we spend more time together, we could get to know one another personally. Is that, uh, something you’d like?” Tommy grinned.

“Yeah. It is.” Phil nodded.

“Okay. Well, I’m almost done here. What do you want to do?” Tommy thought for a moment.

“Techno said you were good with a bow. Would you maybe want to teach me?”

-----

In the half hour the two had been practicing, Tommy had yet to hit the target. However, with Phil’s guidance, he was slowly getting better.

“See, when shooting something far away, you’re gonna want to aim higher.” Phil said, guiding the bow in Tommy’s hands up a bit.

“There. Try shooting now.” Tommy nodded and let go of the bowstring. The arrow flew through the air, just barely hitting the edge of the target.

“Good job!” Phil exclaimed, ruffling Tommy’s hair. The teen smiled.

“Do you wanna try by yourself this time?” Tommy nodded and pulled out an arrow, placing it in his bow. Phil took a couple steps back, wanting to give his son some space.

“I’m gonna get a bullseye now, just watch me!” He aimed higher, just like Phil said, and waited for the wind to die down a bit before he shot the arrow. It just barely hit the target.

“I hit it! Not in the centre, though.”

“Nice! I believe in you! Try to aim it a bit to the left.”

Tommy shifted the bow and shot again. The arrow landed off to the side of the target. Tommy blushed, slightly ashamed.

“Sorry. I’ll get it next time, I promise.”

*Phil’s being nice enough to teach you, and this is how you pay him back? Barely hitting one shot? Pathetic.*

“You don’t have to apologize! Just try again. Focus your eyes on the centre, and move your body and bow to face it head on.”

Tommy did what Phil said and took a shot once more. The arrow shattered a nearby palace window.

“Oh shit, I’m so sorry! I didn’t mean to, I swear-“

Phil stepped forward and put a hand on Tommy’s shoulder. He flinched. *Please don’t cut me I didn’t mean to-*

“Hey. Are you okay?”

*Huh?*

“What?”

“You freaked out a bit. Oh god, did you get hurt? Did the glass hit you? Here, let’s go to the infirmity-“

“I didn’t hurt myself.”

“Oh. What’s wrong then? You don’t have to tell me if you don’t want to, though! I don’t want to pressure you.”

*What the fuck is going on?*

“I just- you’re not mad?”

“Mad? Why would I be mad?” Phil seemed genuinely confused, but his question made Tommy feel worse.

*“Why would I be mad, Tommy? Use your brain for one second and think.”*

*Tommy swallowed nervously. Earlier that day, he had accidentally broken the plates. In his panic, he healed his wounds and threw the shattered glass in the trash in hopes that Dream wouldn’t find out.*

*“Is it because I broke the plates? I’m so sorry-“*

*“That’s part of it. Why else?”*

*“Because I healed myself without permission?”*

*Dream grew livid.*

*“You did what?!”*

*“I’m sorry Dream! I was just so scared that you’d find out-“*

*“So you hid it from me? You know the rules, Tommy. No healing unless I say so, and definitely no secrets.” Dream sighed and pulled three glass vials out of a drawer.*

*One for each thing he did wrong.*

*Tommy stepped forward, eyes glued to the ground as the man cut his wrist.*

*Only after the second vial was full did Dream notice that Tommy was crying.*

*“Hey, look at me. You think I wanna do this? Because I don’t. It hurts me to hurt you. I’m only doing this because you broke the rules, and I want you to be better. You brought this upon yourself.”*

Someone shook his shoulder, breaking him out of his thoughts.

“Tommy?”

*Shit, I spaced out and didn’t answer him.*

“Sorry. You’re mad because I broke the window.”

“What? I’m not mad, I was just worried that you got hurt.”

Tommy pulled himself out of Phil’s grip to look at him.

“But I broke the window.”

“Yeah, you did. But that’s easily fixable. It’s okay, things like this happen. You didn’t mean to, either.” Phil spoke like it didn’t matter, but Tommy knew better.

Dream was usually very open when he was upset, taking action immediately. However, there were times when he pretended that everything was fine, lulling Tommy into a false sense of security, before getting angrier than ever.

Tommy hated when he did that.

But Phil doesn’t get it. Tommy broke the window, so he needed to be punished. *Why isn’t he punishing me?*

“But I *broke* it.” Phil looked at him quizzically, like he was searching for something. He must’ve found it, because his eyes widened in understanding.

“Tommy, what did Dream do when you made a mistake?” *He’s looking for ideas on what to do to me. Should I be honest?*

Tommy rubbed his wrists nervously. Phil looked down at them and gasped.

“Did he cut you?!” Tommy nodded.

Phil sighed, trying to cover his anger at Dream in his concern for his son.

“I need you to listen to me: that’s *never* going to happen to you here.”



Tommy looked up at him. *What?*

“People make mistakes all the time. And while I might get a bit upset in the moment, I’m never going to punish you for it. *Never*. I promise.”

Tears welled into Tommy’s eyes.

“What if I do something awful?”

Phil’s smile was soft.

“Then we’ll figure it out together.”

Phil opened his arms hesitatingly.

Tommy hugged him tight.

“C’mon, let’s go do something else. I heard that Tubbo and Ranboo were in the kitchen, do you wanna go see them?”

“That’d be nice.”

As they walked away, Tommy glanced towards the broken window. Phil followed his gaze, frowning slightly at the crease in Tommy’s brows.

“It’s okay, Tommy. I’ve seen worse. Y’know, when I first tried to teach Wilbur archery, he shot me in the foot, so this is a huge improvement.”

Tommy’s laugh echoed throughout the castle.

# safety

## Chapter Summary

phil tries to have a conversation with tommy about safety. it does not go as planned.

## Chapter Notes

hello!!! i'm back!! im sorry i was gone for so long life got very busy BUT im back now and hoping to update at least one fic a week!! hope you all have been doing well!!

also don't kill me but i physically cant get it to space correctly between the time skip things ive been trying for 23 minutes

as an extra apology this chapter is much longer than i was planning

enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“We need to talk.”

Tommy tensed. Those words always meant bad news. *What did I do wrong?*

“Uh, sure. What’s up, big man?”

Phil must’ve noticed Tommy’s apprehension, because he smiled reassuringly.

“It’s nothing bad, Tommy.” The teen sighed, letting some of his nervousness go.

Ever since he freaked out after breaking a window the week before, Phil and the others had been more understanding towards him. They constantly reminded him that he was loved, and that mistakes were okay.

They never once made fun of his worries, instead trying to help him through them. It made Tommy feel more confident with himself.

“Oh. What is it, then?”

“It’s about your safety.”

And here comes Tommy’s anxiety, back in full force!

Everything Dream did, he claimed it was for Tommy's safety. Every cut, every harsh comment, and every fucking minute he spent alone in that cottage.

Tommy was not about to let that happen again. Not if he could do anything about it.

"I'm plenty safe. No one knows about my powers except my friends and family. And, on top of that, I'm good with a sword. I can take care of myself, thank you very much." Tommy said, making his way towards the door.

"I'm not saying you can't. And this isn't about your powers-"

"Sorry to cut this short, but I'm pretty sure my training with Techno starts now. Bye!"

"Wait-"

A loud slam cut Philza off. He went to run after his son, but opened the door to find himself face-to-face with Wilbur, who looked slightly amused.

"What happened? He ran past me faster than I've ever seen. Was he that pissed about it? I know he's prideful, but I assumed he'd understand where you were coming from." Phil shook his head.

"I didn't even get to tell him yet, Wil. He left before I could. I can't figure out why, though." Wilbur frowned.

"What did you say to him?"

"Nothing bad! He looked anxious that we were having a serious one-on-one conversation, so I told him not to worry, and that it was about his safety. Then he got all defensive, and- well you know the rest." Wilbur considered this for a moment, trying to understand why his little brother had gotten so upset.

A memory from Tommy's birthday came to mind. Tubbo had mentioned something about how the teen had never left his cottage before, since his brother forbade it. *Dream* forbade it. Yet before the battle on the cliffs, Wilbur had never once heard Tommy speak ill of the man.

It was almost like he thought Dream really cared about him.

*Oh, fuck.*

"I think I know what happened."

-----

Technoblade had no clue why Tommy was acting the way he was. The kid was extremely on edge, causing his movements to be stiff and ineffective.

As much as it pained him to say, Tommy was actually a good swordsman. He was quick, fairly skilled, and enthusiastic to learn more.

So what was causing him to be so out of it?

The teen swung at him, missing by a longshot. He barely dodged Techno's retaliating attack.

*Alright, enough is enough.*

"Let's take a break." Tommy nodded at his brother's words, setting his sword down and sitting on the grass. Techno did the same.

After a few minutes of silence, Techno spoke.

"What's up with you?" Tommy turned to look at him.

"Huh? What do you mean? I'm fine."

"You haven't landed one hit on me today. That's low, even for you." He deadpanned. Tommy glared.

"It's nothing, alright? I'm *good*." Tommy ran his fingers through his hair, clearly upset. He kept opening his mouth to talk, only to change his mind and clamp it shut again. Techno sighed.

"Y'know you can talk to me about anything, right? I won't judge."

"It's just- ugh!" Tommy slammed his fists on the grass. Technoblade kept quiet, giving his brother some time to think. Looking out towards the palace, he saw his twin close by, heading over to them. He caught his eye and shook his head slightly. Wilbur huffed but nodded, staying put.

"You guys are nothing like Dream." Tommy said. Techno raised an eyebrow.

"I'd hope so. Isn't that a good thing?"

"Yes! No? I-" Tommy took a second, trying to articulate his thoughts. "You're nice. Wil and You and Phil. You don't punish me for things like he did, and you let me explore the kingdom. You let me try new things, and haven't asked for anything in return."

"And that's a bad thing?"

"No, that's good! I like that. Thanks, by the way."

"You don't have to thank me for treating you like a decent person-"

"Anyway, it's nice. This... *freedom*. It feels like you trust me. It feels like you care about *me*, and not just what I can do for you."

*What he can do for us? What's he talking about? What could he possibly have to offer- oh. Oh shit.*

"We *do* care about you. None of us care about that healing thing you have. We just want you to be happy."

"Don't lie!" Tommy stood up. "This was all just an elaborate plan, wasn't it? Give me some freedom, let me get comfortable, then bam! Start adding rules. *Limiting* me." Techno stood up as well, but chose to keep a few steps distance due to Tommy's anger.

"Tommy, where did this all come from?" Techno asked, trying to keep his voice level.

"Phil! He wanted to talk to me about safety. And I know, *I know* that's how it starts."

"How what starts?!"

"*Everything!*" Techno watched as Tommy took a step closer to him, hands pulling at his golden hair. "The restrictions. The 'it's for your own good, Tommy' or the 'I just want you to be safe'. The being alone for *every fucking second of every fucking day-*"

As soon as Tommy stepped close enough to touch, Techno grabbed his wrists, making him loosen the iron grip on his curls. Tommy looked up at him, anger and panic swimming in his eyes.

A couple stray tears ran down his cheeks, and his hands shook violently. Techno began rubbing soothing circles into his wrists, trying to calm him down.

"*Breathe*, Tommy. You're okay." Techno said, taking a deep breath and exhaling slowly. Tommy looked at him, unsure, before copying his breathing.

"That's it, just like that."

Techno motioned for Tommy to sit back down. The two sat for a while, taking deep breaths until Tommy had calmed down significantly.

"Sorry. I shouldn't've blown up like that."

"It's okay. You don't have to apologize. I think we should talk about what you said, though." Tommy nodded solemnly.

"Yeah, okay. But before we do, let's bring the audience over." Tommy turned to look at Wilbur, waving him over. Wilbur smiled sheepishly before running to them.

"Eavesdropper. Nosy prick." Tommy glared.

"Gremlin. Literal child." Wilbur replied, grinning. Tommy smiled slightly before looking towards the ground, embarrassed.

"How much of that did you hear?" Wilbur sat down next to his brothers.

“Would you feel better if I lied and said none of it?” Tommy rolled his eyes. After some thinking, he spoke.

“I just-” Wilbur nodded slightly, encouraging him to keep going. “It’s hard. Accepting all of this, I mean. You guys are nice now, but I feel like it won’t last. None of you know the full extent of my power, other than Tubbo and Ranboo. What if when you find out, you decide I’m more valuable locked up?” Techno shook his head.

“That’s never gonna happen, Tommy. I swear.”

“But you don’t *know*. You don’t know what I can do.”

“Toms, we literally saw you bring Tubbo back from the dead. What could you possibly do that’s more powerful than that?” Tommy sighed at Wilbur’s words.

“Yeah, you’re right, but that’s just it: that’s not all there is to it. That may have just been a fluke, so it’s not that useful. But I can do *more*.”

“Is it your blood? Is that what heals? Cos’ I remember you cut your arm and rubbed the blood on Tubbo when he died. And you apparently healed Ranboo from those water burns. Is that where your healing is?” Techno asked. Tommy nodded nervously.

“Yeah.”

“Well, problem solved then. Never in a million years would any of us cut you or hurt you in any way. Not even for your powers. Hurting you isn’t worth it.” Tommy huffed, slightly amused.

“I think I believe you. Phil looked absolutely horrified when he found out that Dream used to cut me. And you’ve all said it enough that it’s hard not to think you’re being honest. Plus, you’re all pussies, and could never be able to hurt me anyway. I’m too much of a big man.” Wilbur laughed.

“Right you are.” Tommy smiled, but still wasn’t finished.

“So, we’ve covered that. Great. However, what if you didn’t have to hurt me to access my power?”

“What do you mean?”

“Give me your hand, Wil. Phil told me you cut it yesterday while using a butter knife. Idiot.”

Wilbur looked at Techno, who shrugged. Reluctantly, he stuck out his hand. Tommy held it gently, and began singing. A few seconds later, he began to *glow*. The twins gasped.

After the song was finished and Tommy stopped glowing, he let go of his brother’s hand.

It looked good as new.

“Holy *shit*, Toms.” Wilbur said, flexing his fingers.

“Yeah, what the fuck?!” Techno added. Tommy looked towards the ground.

“See? You wouldn’t have to hurt me to use my power.” Wilbur hummed, thoughtful.

“It’s not worth it.” Tommy looked up at him, confused.

“Huh?!”

“Your power. If we’d make you unhappy, then it’s not worth it.”

Tommy was confused, to say the least. *Why? What’s he on about?*

“Wilbur, I *healed* you. How is that not worth it?”

“It just isn’t. Not if you have to suffer. I’d rather have my brother. So I’ll say it again: *it’s not worth it.*”

“Same here.” Techno added.

Tears sprang into Tommy’s eyes.

“Are you sure?”

“100 percent certain.”

“I- can I hug you?” The twins smiled, pulling their little brother into a hug. The three sat like that for a while, before Wilbur spoke up.

“For the record, you can hug me anytime. I give you full permission.” Tommy nodded, smiling. He took a deep breath, then asked the question that had been on his mind for a while.

“What did Phil wanna talk about?”

“He wants you to have a personal guard. Not because he doesn’t trust you, but because he wants you to be protected. Especially when you go into the kingdom with Tubbo and Ranboo.”

“I don’t need a guard. I’m not a child, I can take care of myself.” Tommy scowled.

“I have one too. His name’s Quackity. Techno doesn’t, but that’s because he could beat up any guard here.”

“True. I even help train them.”

“So it’s not a big thing, okay? And they’ll give you your space whenever you want.” Tommy huffed.

“Fine. But I’m picking my own.”

-----

Tommy stood alone in front of the king's office. Wilbur and Technoblade had offered to come with him, but he told them he could do it on his own.

He was starting to regret that decision.

Taking a deep breath, he raised his hand and knocked.

"Come in!"

Tommy stepped inside, shutting the door behind him.

"Tommy! I'm glad you're here. I want to apologize for earlier. I didn't mean to upset you." Tommy shook his head.

"No, it's not your fault. You didn't do anything wrong. I overreacted, sorry. I shouldn't've left."

"It wasn't an overreaction, it was a panicked response. You have nothing to be sorry for. However..." Phil got up from his chair and walked over to Tommy. "I think you would benefit from therapy." Tommy wrinkled his nose.

"What's that?"

"Therapy helps with coping. Essentially, it would be you and your therapist, alone in a room for an hour every week. You could talk about anything and everything you're feeling: your past, your fears, and anything else you feel you need to get off your chest."

"Why would I do that? I can just tell one of you." Phil sighed.

"You can, and I'm glad you feel comfortable enough with us to do so. We're all happy to help you. However, we can only help so much. A therapist can help you figure out what to do, and some next steps on how to begin moving past things. They can even give you tips on how to deal with stressful situations, like the one from earlier." Tommy nodded.

"Do you really think it'll help?"

"I do. But if you really don't wanna do it, we can figure out something else. I just... I want you to be happy, Tommy. We all do."

Tommy took a couple minutes to think. He didn't really think he needed it, since he was doing just fine managing things (in his opinion).

But on the other end, it would be nice to open up to someone about everything. It helped a lot when he talked to Tubbo and Ranboo about it, back when he first met them. Maybe therapy would be like that?



“Okay. I’ll do it.” Phil grinned.

“Thank you. And if you don’t like it after the first few sessions, we can try something new.”

“Sounds good to me.”

## Chapter End Notes

aaand update finished!! hope you enjoyed! next up we'll have bench trio in the kingdom and a new character :0

drink some water and ilysm <3

# out on the town

## Chapter Summary

tommy meets someone new.

## Chapter Notes

heyyyyy i'm back once again!!! i've decided to give you all some fluff before next chapter because i want to

hope you're all doing well!!!

enjoy!!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

One of the benefits of being locked away your whole life is that people don't recognize you. *Anywhere.*

And even though there was a huge celebration and public introduction of their youngest prince, the vast majority of L'manburg citizens wouldn't be able to point him out.

Which is perfect for Tommy.

It meant that he, along with Tubbo and Ranboo, could sneak out of the castle at any time and not risk being recognized while out.

It meant that he could experience the kingdom, fully and truly like an average person. No one treated him differently because of his status, since his status was unknown.

People were a lot more fun when they weren't worried that they were insulting a member of the royal family.

"Oi! Back away from the door!"

See? No fear whatsoever.

"What if I wanna go inside?" Tommy asked, hovering his hand over the doorknob. The man looked at him skeptically.

"You don't look like you could afford anything in there. No offence."

“You can’t just add ‘no offence’ and expect me not to be offended, you bitch! That’s like if I were to comment on how your baldness makes you look like an egg, then say that I meant it as a compliment.”

The man glared at him, but Tommy pressed on.

“The sign says it’s a plant auction. How much can some random plant be?”

“They’re exotic plants, so quite a lot.”

“Wait, *exotic*? Like drugs?”

The man shook his head quickly.

“No! They’re just from other kingdoms-“

“Are you trying to sell drugs to a minor? Because I’m gonna have to report you, and I have it in with the king-“ Tommy said, grin stretched wide across his face.

“I never said anything about drugs-“

“Wait, is it a *secret*? Are you secretly selling illegal drugs?”

“They’re not drugs! If they were, I’d be taking as many as I could to survive this conversation.”

Tommy smiled wider and caught a glimpse of Tubbo and Ranboo on a nearby rooftop. The hybrid tilted his head in question, and Tommy shook his head slightly, smirking. *Not yet.*

“I’m Tommy. Pleasure to meet you.” Tommy stuck out his hand, and the man reluctantly shook it.

“I’m Jack. And I’d return the sentiment, but I’m fairly certain that this is one of the most unpleasant interactions I’ve ever had.”

Tommy burst out laughing. Jack hid his smile, not wanting the teen to know he was amused.

“Okay but for real, can I go in now?”

Jack shook his head.

“Listen man, this isn’t even my shop. I’m just a security guard. And my boss gets real nasty when I let less fortunate people in to look at the goods.” Tommy hummed.

“Sounds like a proper asshole.”

“Yeah, he is, but unfortunately I gotta follow the rules if I wanna get paid.”

“Why don’t you just get a new job, then?”

“I have one, actually. I’m training to become a full-time royal guard. This is just my weekend job. It’s shit, but until I get my guard certification, I’m stuck with it.”

*Royal guard, huh?*

Before Tommy could respond, an angry man came towards them. Jack stood straighter in an attempt to look more professional. *That must be his boss.*

“Get lost, kid. This auction isn’t for you.”

Tommy glared.

“I just wanna see the plants!”

“Little brats like you aren’t welcome here.”

Tommy found that offensive. *I’m not a brat. A nuisance, sure, but I’m not some bratty snott-nosed little kid.*

The man continued talking, this time aiming his disgust at Jack.

“And you! I told you to keep away anyone who isn’t important enough to be here! Does *he* look important to you?!”

“He just wants to see the plants!” Jack scowled. His boss was not pleased.

“Go to my office. We’ll be having a meeting right after I deal with him.” Jack looked over to Tommy apologetically before heading inside.

Once he was gone, Tommy caught his friends’ eyes, nodding slightly. Tubbo smirked as Ranboo’s purple particles surrounded them.

“Now, you-”

“Prince Theseus!” Tubbo and Ranboo appeared behind him.

Jack’s boss visibly paled.

“We were worried when you wandered off. Were you wanting to see the auction?” Ranboo asked. Tommy shook his head.

“I was actually in the middle of a lovely conversation before I was rudely interrupted.” Tubbo gave the man a quick once-over, glaring.

“Have you been bothering your prince?”

“I- I didn’t recognize you, your Highness! My deepest apologies-” Tommy raised a hand, cutting the man off.

“Save it. Bit too late for that now, yeah? So why don’t you go back to your fancy auction? And let Jack off the hook.” The man nodded and turned to go inside.

“Wait, one more thing! Don’t tell him that I’m the prince, got it?”

“Yes, of course!” The man gave a quick bow before heading through the door.

The second he was gone, the three teens burst into laughter.

“Oh my god, did you see his *face*? He looked mortified!” Ranboo said.

“That was the best one we’ve done all day. Probably because he was so rude to you, Tommy. Hope he learned his lesson.” Tubbo added.

“Yeah, me too. You can’t just be a dick to everyone you think is lesser than you. What an asshole.” Tommy said, sneering. The teens continued to chat as they made their way back to the town square.

“What about that guy before? Jack, was it? Was he nice?”

“No, but he was funny. Apparently he’s training to become a guard.”

Ranboo hummed, thoughtful.

“Hey, didn’t the king want you to choose someone to be your personal guard?”

Tommy grinned.

*Looks like I’ll be seeing him again, then.*

Tubbo gasped, breaking Tommy out of his thoughts.

“Guys, look! They’re selling fireworks! We should totally buy some.” Ranboo looked unsure at the suggestion.

“Remember last time? Technoblade almost hit you in the face.”

“Eh, bygones. Plus, we’ll use them properly this time. No aiming at other people, pinkie promise.” Tubbo said, sticking out his littlest finger. Ranboo sighed and interlocked it with his own.

“Fine, as long as we get some rainbow ones.”

Tommy looked at the two, confused.

“What’s a firework?”

Tubbo smirked.

“Wanna find out?”

-----  
“See, once you light it, you’re gonna have to run away so it doesn’t hurt you.”

After buying some fireworks, the teens headed back to the castle. By the time they returned, the sun had just set, painting the sky in a dark violet.

“Wait, *light it*? What does it do?”

“Here, I’ll light it, you go stand with Ranboo.” Tommy sighed at the lack of explanation, but went to stand with the hybrid nonetheless.

Tubbo pulled out a match and lit the fuse, quickly sprinting towards them. He grinned at Tommy’s confused expression.

“Look up.”

A huge bang ran out, the firework shooting off into the sky. Tommy watched in awe as it exploded into a whirlwind of colours.

“Woah! Holy shit!”

“I know, right?”

“That was *amazing*! How does it do that?” Tubbo shrugged.

“Hell if I know. Wanna light the next one?”

“Fuck yeah I do.” The two ran over to set it up, Tommy turning around to shout back at their friend.

“Ranboo! Wanna light it together?”

“I’m good, thanks! I’ll do mine after you’re done. It’s better when the sky is pitch black.”

Tommy nodded and turned back around to light the firework. Ranboo couldn’t help but smile as his friends lit up with excitement, laughing and cheering as it exploded into the sky.

## Chapter End Notes

aaaand update finished!! hope you enjoyed!! next up? therapy arc

drink some water and get some sleep ilysm <3

fun little work story for you: someone came in dressed in a trench coat and nice boots with brown curly hair and i was cashing them out and all they bought was a broken oil lamp??? pogtopia arc wilbur soot cosplayer??? 10/10

# nightmares and therapy

## Chapter Summary

tommy goes to therapy for the first time.

## Chapter Notes

hello im back!! haha remember when i said that i'd update every week?  
hahahhahahahahaha well uh sorry sorry

anyway this time i swear i'll try to write more and update soon

also YEAH ORIGINS IS BACK BABY WHOS EXCITED

alright enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Hello, Prince Theseus! Come on in.”

Tommy’s therapist waved him inside her office, smiling warmly.

“Hi. You can just call me Tommy, if you want. I don’t really use that other name.”

She nodded and motioned for him to sit down on the couch. She stood up and headed towards the door.

“I’m gonna shut the door to give us some privacy, okay? Unless you’d like it open?”

“Closed is good, thanks.”

Shutting the door, she headed towards a chair, sitting across from Tommy.

“My name is Captain Puffy. It’s nice to meet you.”

“‘Captain’?”

“Yup! Aside from being a therapist, I’m also the captain of the royal guard.”

“Wow. You must be busy.”

Puffy laughed.



“Yeah, I guess I am. But since the kingdom is at peace currently, things with the guards have been pretty tame. Now, are you ready to begin? I have some things to go over before we start.”

Tommy nodded. Puffy smiled, pulling out a notebook and pen.

“So, first things first: everything we discuss here is confidential. I won’t be telling anyone about anything we talk about, not even the king. The only exception is if you indicate that you’ll be causing harm to both yourself or others. Does that sound okay?”

“Yup.”

“Perfect! Now, on to the second thing: therapy can be very beneficial, but it isn’t for everyone. If you feel like it’s not working out, let me know, and we can brainstorm some other ways to help you.”

“Alright.” Puffy smiled.

“Great! One last thing: due to what we’ll be discussing, therapy can bring up a lot of trauma and other harmful things. You may find that it’ll get worse before it gets better. If that happens, please remember that you’re here because the people in your life care about you, and that I’m willing to help whenever I can.”

Tommy tilted his head, confused. *What does she mean?*

Puffy, picking up on his body language, smiled slightly before explaining.

“It can be different for everyone. Some people experience more outbursts for a while, since the things that they’ve worked so hard to repress are being brought up. Others get more anxious, and some people get nightmares or see things from their past, even if they’re not really there. These are just a few examples, some more common than others. Don’t worry though, this shouldn’t last as you get used to talking about things more. Many people don’t even experience any negative reactions to therapy.”

“Oh. Okay, I get it now.”

“Good. Is there anything else you’d like to know before we begin?”

“No, I think I’m good to start.”

“Alright. Since this is our first session, I’d like to get to know you more. Could you tell me a bit about your past? King Philza mentioned that you were struggling with adjusting here, but not much else.”

Tommy took a deep breath, taking some time to think.

“Where do I start? I guess I was kidnapped when I was a baby, and raised in the forest by Dream. He was the one that took me.” Puffy nodded, writing something down as she did. She paused, looking up at him.

“Did you know you were the Prince?”

“No. Dream said he was my brother. And for 17 years, I believed it.”

“I see. If you’re comfortable, can you tell me a little bit about how you ended up back here?”

Tommy breathed a small sigh of relief. If there was one thing he hated more than being alone, it was pity.

Thankfully, Puffy cut right to the chase. She didn’t sit there and apologize for things that were out of her control, she just asked him what she needed to know.

“Sure. Dream had just left, and I was laying down in my room, alone. Then I heard someone come inside, so I went to go check it out. And there was Tubbo, standing in my living room...”

-----

Tommy woke up with a start. Looking around the room rapidly, he took in his surroundings.

A big window with a balcony, moonlight streaming in. A chair in the corner, fitted with a small candle on the side table and a nice pillow. A large rug on the floor. The bottom end of a double bed, the blankets ruffled and strewn about.

He sighed in relief.

*You’re in your room at the palace. Tubbo and Ranboo are in the rooms next door. Wil and Techno are down the hall, near Phil’s room. Dream isn’t here. You’re okay.*

Luckily, Tommy was somewhat used to talking himself down after a nightmare. He’d been getting them pretty frequently since he left the glade, memories of Tubbo’s death and Ranboo being thrown off of the cliff plaguing his dreams. He’s gotten good at reminding himself that things are okay, that his friends and family are alive and well.

This one was different, though.

Dream’s mask, that fucking smile, felt like it was burned into his eyelids. Every time he blinked, it danced across his vision.

He’s never had a nightmare that bad before. He never used to get them at all before he left the cottage.

It was weird. Back then, his dreams consisted of fond memories of Dream, mixed with him finally being able to leave. Now, however, they mostly involve everyone he loves dying, with

him being unable to heal them.

This dream was neither of those.

He had fucked up somehow. His family, the royal family, had decided that they preferred their lives before they found him. They sent him back to the cottage. Back to Dream.

He had cried, and Dream had held him, assuring him that everything was how it was meant to be. Tommy allowed himself to be comforted. Even though they were rare, Dream always gave good hugs.

He woke up longing for that comfort. It made him sick.

Groaning, he slowly got up from his bed and silently left his room, creeping down the huge hallways of the castle.

He hadn't quite gotten the hang of where everything was, but he'd memorized the route to the kitchen pretty quickly. Maybe a nice, cool glass of water would help him calm down a bit.

Standing in the doorway, he was surprised to see someone else there. The countertop was littered with ingredients and measuring cups, and a young woman stood in the center of the chaos. She looked up from the dough she was mixing to smile at him. He awkwardly waved back.

"Sorry for the mess! I wasn't expecting anyone to come in here for a while."

"Oh, sorry. I can go, if I'm bothering you-" She looked confused for a second, then shook her head.

"Hm? You're not bothering me! Come on in, I'm just doing some baking." Tommy did as she said, pulling out a chair. He began fiddling with his hands, still slightly shaken up from earlier.

She looked over at him for a second, frowning when she noticed how jittery he was.

"Do you wanna help me form the bread loaves?"

Tommy looked up at her.

"Oh. Uh, sure? I don't really know how to, though." She smiled at him.

"That's okay! I can teach you. It's best to learn through experience. Just watch what I do and try to follow along. If you need help, don't be afraid to ask." He walked over to her, unsure. She grinned at him.

"Stick out your hands." Tommy did just that, and she sprinkled them with flour.

"There. Now they won't stick to your dough." She pulled out her dough from the bowl, dividing it into two pieces before placing one on the counter in front of him. With her dough,

she began to press into it, kneading it into a thick rod shape. Watching her work, Tommy tried to do the same.

It was nice, having something to do. His mind focused on the task at hand, rather than his thoughts. Soon, he was done with his rod. It was a tad misshapen, but overall looked good.

“Perfect! Now, take your hand like this, and divide it into three.” She straightened her hand and used it to chop into the dough.

Once Tommy was finished as well, she told him to roll each section into a thin strip, roughly the same length. As they worked, she began to talk.

“I’m Niki, by the way. It’s nice to meet you.”

“Nice to meet you too. I’m Tommy.”

“I haven’t seen you around before. Are you one of the new housekeeping hires?”

“Uh, yup! I am. One of the best housekeepers in the land, might I add.”

Niki laughed. Done with his first strip, Tommy began to roll his second.

“Y’know, when I first got here, I had awful nightmares. I still get them, sometimes.”

“What do you mean, ‘when you got here’?”

“I wasn’t born in L’manburg. I moved here from my old kingdom when I was around 14.”

“Why’d you move?”

“Ah, well. There was a lot of war and conflict. I couldn’t handle it. I wanted to have a better life, somewhere I could build a home for myself.”

“I’m not from here either. Well, I was born here I guess, but I’ve only really lived here for a few weeks.”

On to the last piece, now.

“Do you like it here?”

“I think so. It’s a lot better than where I was before. But it’s *weird*. I’m so scared that I’ll mess up and they’ll send me away. I don’t want to be alone again.” Tommy paused, his hands too shaky to properly roll his dough.

“How do you trust it? The good things, I mean. How do you know that it’ll all be okay?”

Niki took a second to think.

“To be honest, I still don’t fully trust it. There are still nights where I wake up hearing the screams from my old kingdom. But over time, you learn to cope. You find people. Good

people, who care. You take up an activity, like baking. You try to keep going. And one day, you find that you don't have to try anymore; you just *live*."

"Does it last?"

"For the most part. You'll always have off days, but you'll find that you can manage them. Just give yourself time."

Tommy kneaded his last strip for the final time. Smiling, Niki showed him how to weave them together to form a braid. Placing their loaves into the oven, she dusted her hands on her apron. Tommy cleared his throat.

"Thanks for teaching me. You're right, it does help a bit."

"Well, it gets a bit lonely here in the mornings. The royal family has always loved my bread, but with the new prince and his friends around, I've had to bake a bit more for their breakfasts. I wouldn't mind the help, if you're up for it."

Tommy smiled at the invitation.

"Sounds great. And you're right about them loving your bread: I've seen Prince Wilbur try and stuff an entire loaf in his mouth."

Niki laughed and waved him away.

"Alright, go back to bed. Wouldn't want you to be tired for your shift tomorrow."

Waving goodbye, Tommy headed back into his room. He felt slightly guilty for lying to Niki about being on the palace staff, but he worried that she wouldn't let him help her if she knew who he was.

Sighing, he flopped down onto his bed. While he did feel calmer, being back in his room took away some of the peacefulness he gained while baking. Glancing out his window, Tommy saw a glimpse of a figure with a porcelain smile.

*What?*

Rubbing his eyes and looking again, he saw nothing there. He groaned and laid his head down onto his pillow.

*Don't be stupid, there's no way he's there. It's just because I'm bringing up trauma, like Puffy said.*

## Chapter End Notes

aaaaaaand update finished!! hope you enjoyed!! next up? who knows? im thinking some brotherly bonding

drink some water and ilysm <3

as always, thanks for reading

# new job

## Chapter Summary

Tommy gets a personal guard.

## Chapter Notes

HELLO IM BACK

once again cherryfrog says that she'll be back only for her to not be back

in my defence its been a very hectic month

i got into university!! im happy but scared at the same time but holy fuck whyyyy is it so expensive like my minimum wage job could never

anyway enjoy! i do hope to post soon

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“God, I’m so nervous.”

Jack stood in the guard training field, duelling with a coworker.

“It’s your third day! You’re bound to still have a bit of anxiety.” Quackity responded, blocking Jack’s swing with his own sword.

“I know, I know. But what if I mess up? I don’t wanna get fired.”

“You won’t! Listen, I’ve seen you fight. You’ve got the stuff. You just gotta believe in yourself a bit more. Plus, you’ve been good so far.” Jack sighed. Quackity had a point.

“I guess you’re right.”

“Of course I am. Now focus up, your nerves are making you sloppy.”

Jack let his mind drift as he sparred with Quackity. After some time, his opponent sighed.

“Alright, let’s go. We start in around 10 minutes.” Jack nodded, and the two headed towards the dressing room. As he got into his uniform, the pit in his stomach returned.

He followed Quackity to the section of the palace that they were assigned. He was thankful that he was put to train with the man, as the two had known each other for a few years. It was nice to see a familiar face in such a large castle.

As they walked, Quackity explained more of the ins and outs of the job, with Jack butting in here and there to ask a question.

As they stood at their post, Jack fiddled with his hands. Glancing at him, Quackity sighed.

“Hey, you’re good. It’s okay, man. Just take a breather.”

“I just don’t wanna mess up! What if I accidentally break something? What if I fail in the line of duty? What if I get summoned by the king?”

Quackity smiled reassuringly.

“If you break something, you just clean it up. And you won’t fail. If you do, I’ll make sure that your tombstone says something cool.”

Jack huffed a laugh.

“Thanks. Glad I can count on you.” He deadpanned. Quackity laughed.

“You know me; I’m always dependable. And as for the getting summoned thing, I’m literally Prince Wilbur’s personal guard, and I’ve only been summoned, like, 2 times.”

Before Jack could respond, another guard rounded the corner and headed towards the two. She stopped in front of them.

“I’m looking for-“ She squinted down at the paper in her hand, “Jack Manifold?”

Jack furrowed his brow, confused.

“That’s me.”

“The king has requested to see you. If you follow me, I can take you to him.”

He glanced over at Quackity worriedly. The man looked just as shocked as he felt.

Jack elbowed him.

“Ow! What was that for?!”

“You said I had nothing to worry about!”

“Well, how was I supposed to know that he’d summon you?! What the fuck did you do?”

“I didn’t do anything!”

The other guard laughed at the two.



“It’s nothing bad. He didn’t seem upset in the slightest.” Jack sighed at her words.

“Fine. Lead the way.”

She led him down a couple hallways, and soon they were standing outside of King Philza’s office. Jack took a deep breath before knocking, stepping inside after hearing a muffled

“Come in!”

Philza looked up at him and smiled as he shut the door.

“Please, have a seat.”

Jack nodded and sat down. Philza pulled out a file and gave it a quick once-over before setting it down to look at him.

“Jack Manifold, right?”

“Yes, sir.” Philza waved his hand at the guard’s formal tone.

“Oh, none of that. You can call me Philza.”

“Oh, uh, okay?” The man laughed slightly at Jack’s awkwardness.

“Anyway! I’m sure you’re wondering why I’ve called you here?”

“Yeah. It was a bit of a surprise.”

“Well, I’m guessing that you’ve heard that my youngest son, Prince Theseus, has recently returned.”

Jack nodded.

“Basically, I’ve told him that he needs to have a personal guard. Someone to watch over him and to keep him out of trouble. And I allowed him to choose one himself.” Phil smiled.

Jack furrowed his brows, confused, before realization dawned on his face.

“Wait, *me*?!” Phil nodded.

“Now, I know it’s your first week, so if you feel unprepared, or you just overall don’t want the job, that’s okay. I understand that this must be a bit of a shock.” Jack shook his head.

“No, it would be an honour! I’m just a bit confused as to why he would choose me.”

“To be honest, I don’t really know, either. I planned to let him meet every guard before he narrowed it down, but when I handed him a list of names, he lit up when he saw yours.”

“And you’re okay with that? I don’t wanna come across as rude or anything, but I’m still new. I assumed that you would’ve picked someone more experienced.”

“To be fair, I was going to. But I promised him that he could choose, and wouldn’t be right of me to go back on that. Plus he’s pretty skilled in sword fighting. I just need to have faith in his skill.”

The two continued to chat, easing Jack’s anxiety as time went on. Even though he was the king, Phil was very easy to talk to.

He took some time to explain the job, saying that it would be mostly the same as his current one. However, there would be a few more responsibilities and a higher pay. He’d have to monitor the prince whenever he was out of the castle, as well as some nights or other select times. He’d also have to guard the prince if either the king or Theseus himself asked him to.

Phil slid a couple forms towards the guard, who was fidgeting with a quill. He smiled warmly.

“Listen, I’ve seen your file. You were top of your class, and you got your certification with honours. I’d be happy if you were to accept this opportunity. And, if at any point you feel uncomfortable, you can return to your previous role.”

Jack took another moment to think it over, then grinned.

“Where do I sign?”

-----

Jack followed Phil down many hallways, eventually stopping in front of a large door. Looking closer, he could see small flower and sun sketches intricately carved into the wood.

“Before we go in, there’s one more thing we need to discuss.” Phil said.

“Okay.”

“My son has been through hell to get back here. He’s working on moving on, but these things take time.”

“I get it. I’ll do my best to help in any way I can.”

Phil smiled.

Black wings entered Jack’s vision, almost surrounding him.

“If you hurt him in any way, I will personally see to it that you never see the light of day again. Do you understand?”

Jack nodded nervously.

“Yes sir. I understand completely.”

“Perfect!” Phil’s grin returned, and his wings folded neatly behind his back once more. Jack sighed in relief.

Phil knocked on the door, opening it after a loud “Come in!” was yelled from inside.

Prince Theseus was sitting on his bed, reading. He glanced over to the door as the two walked in.

Jack froze the second he saw his face.

It was the kid who tried to sneak into the auction. The one who wouldn’t stop bothering him.

*You’ve got to be kidding me.*

“Tommy, this is Jack Manifold. Your new personal guard.” Phil said, pulling Jack out of his thoughts.

Tommy stepped forward and stuck out his hand. He was very clearly biting on the inside of his cheek, trying not to laugh.

“It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

Jack gripped his hand, shaking it harshly.

“Likewise. It’s an honour to be of your service.”

Tommy snorted.

“I’m sure it is.”

“Well! Now that you’ve met, would you rather me leave you alone to get to know each other?” Phil said, shooting his son a soft yet nervous look. Tommy smiled reassuringly.

“I’ll be fine, Phil. Go do... whatever it is you do.”

“Alright, alright. You can’t blame me for being cautious. But I have faith that you’re in safe hands. Keep an eye on him today, okay? Just so you two can get used to this.”

Jack nodded at Phil’s words. With that, the king left them alone. The second he was gone, Tommy burst out laughing.

Jack glared.

“I can’t believe that *you’re* royalty.”

“Oi! I’m plenty princely!”

“How?! And I’m not even saying that to be rude. I’m genuinely curious.”

“Oh, fuck off.”

“Unfortunately, I can’t. It’s quite literally my job to be with you.”

“Yeah, but I’m basically your boss. You’ve got to do whatever I say.”

Jack shook his head smugly.

“Not true. I’m under King Philza’s command.”

Before Tommy could respond, the doors to the balcony burst open. Two teens walked into the room. Jack reached for his sword, but Tommy held his arm back.

“It’s okay, these are my friends.”

The brunette stepped forward.

“I’m Tubbo. You’re Jack, right?” Jack nodded.

“That’s me.”

“I’m Ranboo. Nice to meet you.” The other teen said.

“Now that we’ve all met, we couldn’t help but overhear your conversation. And I hate to break it to you, but technically speaking, you’re under Tommy’s command *and* Phil’s.” Tubbo said, smiling.

“How the hell would you know that?”

“We were kinda eavesdropping on your entire personal guard hiring process.”

“Congratulations, by the way.” Ranboo added, smirking. “I heard that you’ve gotta stick with him at all times when he’s outside of the castle. It’s gonna be a lot of fun.”

“Well, it’s gonna be a lot of fun for *us*. You, on the other hand...” Tommy inched closer to his friends as Tubbo laughed. Ranboo put a hand on both of their shoulders.

Jack reached out as he saw purple particles surround them.

“Since it’s your first day, I’ll give you a hint: we’ll be in the gardens!” Tommy shouted as the three disappeared right before Jack’s eyes, leaving him alone.

He wanted to scream.

Although the gardens weren’t *technically* outside the palace, Philza had ordered him to keep an eye on Tommy all day.

He sprinted out of the room. This job was an honour, and he was *not* going to lose it.

No matter how annoying it might become.

## Chapter End Notes

aaaaaand update finished!!! hope you enjoyed!! next up: jack is at his wit's end

drink some water and get some sleep <333

ilysm and thank you for reading! i really appreciate that people still read my work despite me taking my sweet fucking time to update it

# understanding

## Chapter Summary

there might be more to tommy than jack originally thought.

## Chapter Notes

hey guys

word of advice: dont take 12U politics i am SUFFERING

okay its actually v intereting but ive had 90 pages of reading in the last week and i am tired

LIKE WHY ITS NOT UNI??? WHY THIS MUCH WORK ITS HIGH SCHOOL GOD DAMN

anyway whatever but yeah between school and work ive been insanely busy so im sorry for not updating sooner

as a special treat, this chapter is almost 3k words

go listen to laurel hell by mitski

okay enjoy!!!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

This job is the most annoying thing that Jack has ever experienced.

It's only been a few weeks, and yet every day feels like his first.

Actually, the job itself isn't bad at all. It pays well, and it's a very honourable position. The hours are good, and the king has been nothing but nice to him.

The only problem he has with it is Tommy. The young prince is surely going to be the death of him.

He just doesn't *listen*. Every day, without fail, he and his friends teleport out of the castle, leaving Jack little clues on where they might be. Every day, he rushes into the kingdom, looking everywhere for them.

Phil had been very clear: Tommy was not to be alone outside of the palace.

Tommy has been very clear in his hatred for that rule.

It's *exhausting*. Chasing after three teenagers is a lot harder than it sounds.

Once he finds them, though, they tend to stop trying to run away. Tommy always wants to, begging Ranboo to teleport them somewhere new. Thankfully, he always says no (granted, it's because he wants to save whatever plan they have next for another day, but Jack's not gonna complain when it gives him a bit of a break).

He doesn't get it, really. When he's actually with Tommy, he makes no effort to stop him from having fun. He simply watches him, making sure he doesn't get into trouble, as per the king's request.

So why does Tommy insist on running? It makes no sense!

It's like he *wants* to make Jack's life a living hell.

Today was no different.

Quackity had taken to helping him find the trio, saying that he had lots of experience (whatever that meant).

However, after almost an hour of searching, Jack was beginning to lose hope. Either the teens had forgotten to leave a little note or trinket as a hint, or they chose not to.

Great. How was he supposed to find them now? They could be anywhere!

"What am I supposed to do? I wasn't trained for this!" Jack exclaimed.

Quackity sighed.

"I don't really know how to help you. We've turned this whole room upside-down."

"You said you had, and I quote, 'lots of experience!'"

"Yeah, experience! As in I've *experienced* people tracking other people! I know how to do it in *theory*, but I've got no practice." Quackity paused, humming. Seconds later, his eyes lit up. "But I know who does!"

-----

The twin princes were seconds away from laughing.

"So, let me get this straight: Tommy's been *running away*?" Prince Wilbur asked. Jack nodded.

“Yes. Well, not quite. He usually leaves clues, and he’s always with his friends.”

“So what, now you can’t find them?” Prince Technoblade raised his brows.

“Yeah. Quackity’s been helping me recently, but he told me to come to you two. I’m not really sure why.”

Wilbur hummed, a grin forming across his face.

“It’s been quite a bit since we’ve done this. I kinda miss it. What was the score again, Tech?”

“62 to 61. They’re winning, unfortunately.”

“Well, then this would be a good time to tie it up, don’t you think?”

Jack stood awkwardly as the twins schemed. Eventually, he cleared his throat to get their attention.

“Sorry to interrupt, but does this mean that you’ll help me?”

-----

Tommy was sitting peacefully between his friends on a bench, watching as people flowed in and out of the market.

Vendors stood at their stalls, selling everything from vegetables to candles. Families browsed the many stands, kids running slightly ahead of their parents to get a look at the goods lining the streets. Friends and couples alike bought groceries and baked goods to last them through the week.

Ranboo had said that markets like this happen once a week in the summer, usually on Saturdays. Farmers, artisans, bakers, and other people with things to sell would set up shop in the morning, staying in their stalls well into the afternoon.

Tommy loved it. He loved the vibrant colours of the fabric awnings that shaded people from the sun. He loved watching the baker sneak an extra cookie into someone’s purchase. He loved the spark in a painter’s eye when someone would take an interest in their work.

He never wanted to leave.

“Uh oh. We’ve been spotted.” Tubbo said, pointing. Tommy followed his gaze, frowning as he locked eyes with Jack, who was heading toward them.

Ranboo huffed.



“Alright, I think we should split up. He can’t catch all three of us.” He paused, waiting for confirmation. Once his friends both nodded, he continued. “Tommy, you go down the alley ahead of us. Tubbo, you weave through the crowd. I’ll head up on the rooftops. We meet at the fountain as soon as possible. Sound good?”

“Yup. See you soon!” Tubbo shouted, quickly running and disappearing into the crowd. Ranboo teleported away.

Smirking, Tommy sprinted into the alleyway. He could hear Jack call out after him.

Tubbo expertly dodged people as he made his way to the fountain. He turned back for a second to make sure that he wasn’t being followed, and slammed into someone ahead of him.

“Oh! Sorry, sorry! I wasn’t looking where I was going! Are you okay?”

The person gripped his shoulder tightly.

“Where are you heading in such a hurry?”

Tubbo paled. He knew that voice.

“*Wilbur?* What the fuck, man! Let me go!”

Wilbur shook his head, dragging Tubbo behind a building for some privacy.

“No can do, I’m afraid. Besides, I think this brings us to a tie.”

Tubbo huffed.

“God damn it.”

“Now, are you gonna come to the castle willingly, or are we gonna have a problem?”

Tubbo glared at him. As much as he wanted to pull out of his grip and run away, he knew that Wilbur would find him rather quickly.

However, that didn’t mean that he couldn’t be as annoying as possible.

The teen dragged his feet the entire way to the palace, sulking. Wilbur only laughed.

“Don’t be a sore loser, man. Just take the L.”

Tubbo wrinkled his nose, thinking hard on what Wilbur said.

“Wait, you haven’t won *shit*, bitch! Ranboo and Tommy are still out there!”

Wilbur smirked.

“Trust me, they’ll be caught soon enough. Tommy went into an alley with a dead end.”

“Yeah, but Ranboo’s out there too. I bet he’s kicking ass.”

Ranboo was not, in fact, kicking ass.

Apparently, his retreat to the rooftops had been anticipated. As purple particles faded from his vision, he startled when he saw Technoblade standing in front of him.

Techno laughed at his shock, taking the opportunity to grab his arm.

“Dude, you’ve really gotta stop assuming that the rooftops are a good hiding place.”

“What’re you even doing here?”

“Well, it’s come to my attention that you three have been picking on Jack. So, Wil and I thought it would be best to even out the teams a bit.”

Ranboo scowled.

The two stood in silence for a few minutes before Techno cleared his throat.

“So... can you teleport us to the castle? I don’t really wanna have to walk all the way back there.”

Ranboo gaped at him, exasperated.

“You’ve got to be kidding me.”

-----

Ranboo and Tubbo were sitting on a plush couch, ignoring the princes in protest.

Despite the fact that they were scowling, they weren’t really mad. They were more upset that their winning score running from the twins had been tied up.

Techno couldn’t care less about their moodiness. He won fair and square, after all.

Wilbur, on the other hand, hated being ignored. Loser.

“Aw, c’mon guys, you can’t actually be mad-“

“We’re not *mad*, per say, we’re just disappointed that you’d stoop as low as to cheat.”  
Ranboo said, picking at his fingernails.

“Oh boo hoo, cry about it. We didn’t cheat at all.” Techno rolled his eyes.

“Yeah, I don’t even think it’s *possible* to cheat in a chase! It’s not like we set up traps or anything!”

Tubbo huffed.

“Fine. You can take your win-“

“Hell yeah we can-“

“-but not until Jack gets here with Tommy. *Then* you’ve got us all.”

“Fine.”

As if on queue, Jack opened the door with Tommy in tow. The teen was glaring daggers at his guard. When he spotted his brothers, however, his attention turned to them.

“Oi! I can’t believe you two! What happened to protecting your siblings, and all that?”

His brothers laughed.

“To be fair, you *were* terrorizing your guard.”

“And I’d do it again in a heartbeat, so I don’t really see your point.”

-----

After that day, Jack had two new accomplices.

The trio still ran away frequently, but now, the princes would come and help.

As much as he hates to admit it, it’s actually a bit more fun.

It’s still exhausting as hell, don’t get him wrong, but it’s slowly getting better (no thanks to Tommy, the teen was still an annoyance).

Tubbo and Ranboo seemed to like Jack just fine, and have since started to get along with him quite well. Tommy, on the other hand, outright refuses to try. Jack had basically given up any hope of bonding with the prince.

Everything changed late one night.

Jack stood outside Tommy’s door, guarding diligently. Despite Tommy insisting that he be left alone at night, Philza had asked Jack to secretly keep watch once or twice a week (just to be safe).

He didn’t mind. It was peaceful, not having to constantly deal with Tommy’s antics.

His peace was shattered when a shout came from behind the door.

Wasting no time, Jack gripped his sword and burst inside. A red knife was quickly pressed against his neck. His eyes had not yet adjusted to the darkness of the room, leaving him almost blind to the attacker.

They must've recognized him, though, because the blade was removed as quickly as it had appeared.

"Shit! Sorry, I thought- sorry." That wasn't the voice of some random intruder. That was undoubtedly Tommy.

Jack was at a loss. *What the hell?*

"Uh, it's fine?"

He sighed in relief as the teen stepped back. As Tommy lit some candles, Jack took in his appearance.

He looked awful. He was shaking, constantly running his hands through his hair. His breathing was ragged. His eyes were watery. He turned to face Jack, anxiety written on his face.

"I didn't hurt you, did I?"

"No, I'm good."

Tommy's shoulders sagged. He sat down on his bed, fiddling with the blankets.

"Thank god. I'm really sorry. I didn't know it was you."

Jack furrowed his brows.

"Are you okay? The Tommy I know would never care if I got hurt."

Tommy smiled slightly.

"I'm alright. Thanks."

The two sat in awkward silence, both unsure of what to say. Eventually, Jack was the one to break it.

"What happened? Bad dream?"

Tommy flinched and glanced towards his balcony.

"Something like that."

"...Do you wanna talk about it?" Tommy shook his head.

If he didn't want to talk about it, Jack wasn't gonna push it. Nodding, he took a step towards the door.

“Okay, well, if you’re good-”

“Wait!” He paused.

Tommy flushed.

“Can you stay?” His surprise must’ve been clear, because the teen was quick to backtrack.  
“Sorry, sorry. You can go. I’m good. Sorry.”

The guard stood still for a second longer, then huffed. Walking away from the prince, he began to pull a reading chair back over towards the bed.

“What are you doing?”

Jack scoffed.

“Well, you don’t expect me to sit on the floor, do you?”

“No, I- you’re staying?”

“Obviously.”

He snatched one of the many blankets off of Tommy’s bed, making himself comfortable. Tommy tossed him a pillow to put behind his head.

The candle began to flicker a bit as it burnt slowly. A nice lavender scent was beginning to fill the room as the wax melted. Soon, Jack was starting to relax, letting the surprise from earlier wash away.

“I’m sorry.”

Jack opened his eyes just to roll them.

“I swear to god, If you apologize one more time, I’ll chuck this pillow at you. I already said it’s fine.”

“Not about that! Well, yeah, I am still sorry, but that’s not what I’m talking about.” Tommy took a deep breath. “I’m sorry for being such a dick to you.”

“Oh.” That was definitely not what the guard had expected to hear.

“I don’t like restrictions. I have a bit of a bad history with them. And even though I know you’re not actually restricting me at all, I still feel like you could? I don’t know. It scares the hell out of me. It’s dumb, I know, but Puffy said that it makes sense. Trauma, man. It’s fucking stupid.”

“Tommy-”

“I’m not saying this for pity, or anything. This is just supposed to be an explanation, alright? Nothing more.”

Jack huffed, but stayed silent. Tommy continued.

“It helps, turning it into a game like that. Making you chase me, stressing you out, making fun of you. It makes me feel like I could get away if I really wanted to. Like you’re doing this for fun, not because it’s your job to monitor me. Either way, I’m sorry. That’s not an excuse.” Tommy paused, trying to find the right words. “I had no right to make your life hell just to make mine a bit better.”

Jack was honestly kind of shocked. He knew that Tommy had been taken as a kid (it was a talk of the kingdom for years), but he’d never really given thought as to what that must have done to him.

He’d never really stopped to consider what he’s been through.

“To tell you the truth, it hasn’t been *all* bad. It’s fun to work with the princes to help find you. And as for you making fun of me, I’d say we’re about even on that. I’ve definitely gotten my fair share of jabs.”

Tommy snorted.

“Whatever you say, man.” Jack glared at him, but Tommy could clearly tell it wasn’t genuine.

“Between you, Tubbo, and Ranboo, this job has actually been a lot more entertaining than I thought it would.”

“Never a dull moment with us around, yeah?”

The two laughed before Jack became more serious.

“Can I ask you a question?” Tommy nodded.

“Hit me.”

“Why did you choose me? Philza said that you were shown a list of every guard. Why some random new guy?” Tommy looked caught off-guard at the question. “You don’t need to answer, if you don’t want to-”

“Do you remember the first time we met?”

Jack paused for a second, then nodded.

“When I was trying to sneak into that auction, you were fun to be around. Your insults didn’t feel mean, like everyone else’s from that day. And then, when your boss came, you stood up for me, and risked getting in trouble. Even though I had annoyed the hell out of you, you defended me. It stuck with me, I guess. I wanted a guard who was like that. Someone who would be there for me, no matter how much I bothered them.”

“Huh. I never really thought about it that way. I thought you just wanted to be a bitch.”

“That may have been a huge factor as well, but who’s to say, really?”

They continued to talk for quite some time, until a loud yawn from Tommy reminded Jack of how late it was.

“Okay, I think it’s bedtime for you.”

“Oi! I’m not a child!”

“Why do you act like one, then?”

Tommy stuck his tongue out at him. Jack shook his head, amused.

“See? Proving my point for me.”

After some more bickering, Jack brought up sleeping once more. This time, however, Tommy got quiet, glancing subtly at the balcony once more. Sensing his nervousness, the guard smiled reassuringly.

“Hey, I’m not going anywhere. I’ll be here all night in case something happens. I’ve got your back.”

Tommy grinned back gratefully.

“Thank you. Really.”

With that, Tommy was finally able to go back to bed. In the morning, he woke up to the sound of Jack snoring from his chair.

No matter how hard he tried, he couldn’t recall his nightmare from the night before. It was the most restful sleep he’d had in a long time.

He crept quietly out of bed, careful not to wake his friend. Shutting the door softly, he met up with Tubbo and Ranboo before heading to breakfast.

“So, what’s the plan for today? Another kingdom adventure?” Wilbur asked between mouthfuls of bread.

Tommy shook his head.

“Nope! I was thinking of exploring the castle a bit more. There’s a lot of it that I haven’t taken the time to see.” Techno snorted.

“I don’t believe that for a second.”

“No, it’s true!”

“But what about the plan?” Tubbo pouted. “I thought we were gonna- mph!” Tubbo glared as Ranboo shoved a muffin into his mouth.

“Shh! Don’t spoil it! But seriously Tommy, what about the plan?”

Tommy laughed.

“We can do it another time. Jack deserves a break.”

## Chapter End Notes

aaaaaaaand update finished!!!! hope you enjoyed!!!

i really appreciate reads, kudos, and comments the fact that people actually enjoy my work baffles me

but thank you all ilysm <3333

drink some water i know you need it

see you all soon <3



## End Notes

aaaaand update finished!! hope you enjoyed!! next up: who knows? its a surprise :)

our least favourite kidnapper may be making an appearance

anyway, have a great day!! drink some water and ily <3

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